

CICADAS

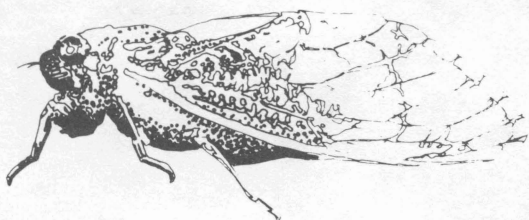
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Probably no other insect in the United States has caused as much curiosity and wonder as cicadas. American Indians once thought these creatures had some evil significance, while even today their appearance in large numbers arouses fear of crop destruction. Cicadas can damage or destroy trees and shrubs, particularly young, newly transplanted ones. The noise created by their song can become nerve-racking, creating a nuisance in urban areas.

Identification

Adult cicadas are stocky insects with prominent eyes and large, semi-transparent wings which fold tent-like against the body. Most of the adult cicadas



are about $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches in length and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, although a few are much smaller. Their bodies are dark brown to black but their eyes and prominent wing veins are bright reddish-orange. The legs also are somewhat reddish in color.

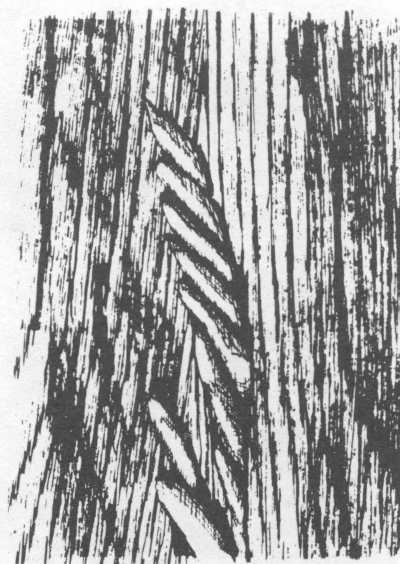
Biology and Habits

Periodical cicadas, commonly misnamed as 17-year locusts, are widely distributed over the eastern half of the United States. There are six or more closely related species. Three species occur mainly in the Northern states and complete their life cycle in 17 years; three or more species occur in the South and

Texas and complete their life cycle in 13 years. This should not be interpreted to mean that the insect is seen only at 17- or 13-year intervals. The various populations are known as broods, and different broods emerge every year. In fact, 23 broods have been located and their appearance can be accurately predicted.

Common, or dog-day, cicadas are closely related and similar in appearance. These cicadas are generally larger, appear later in the summer, and have life cycles of 1 to 5 years.

Female cicadas, using a curved, saw-like, egg-laying apparatus, puncture the bark of twigs or small branches to make a pocket into which 24 to 28 eggs are deposited. A single female may make as many as 20 pockets and lay up to 400 to 600 eggs. The pockets



sometimes are placed close together, forming a series of slits 2 to 3 inches long.

Eggs hatch in 6 to 7 weeks. The resulting ant-like nymphs drop to the ground and burrow through the soil to find roots from which they suck juices. Nymphs

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may be found from 2 to 24 or more inches below the soil surface. Toward the end of their underground life, cicada nymphs burrow upward to within an inch of the soil surface to await the proper time to emerge. Under some conditions, the nymphs may build mud cones or chimneys 3 or 4 inches high. The emergence hole in the mud cone (or in the soil if no cone is constructed) is about ½ inch in diameter.

Adult emergence from the nymphal skin takes place at night on trees, posts or buildings. The adult comes out of a split along the back of the nymphal skin. The light brown cast skin may persist for months if undisturbed. Adult emergence may begin as early as April and last through June or July, depending upon species and geographic locality. Adults live 5 to 6 weeks during which they mate and deposit eggs.

Damage

Female cicadas do not sing, but their egg-laying activity can severely damage or destroy twigs and small branches of vines, shrubs and trees. Only the males sing or drum. Sound is produced by means of two shell-like, inflated drums in the sides of the abdomen being vibrated by a special, strong muscle.

Cicada singing may become incessant and loud, causing nervousness, irritability and auditory fatigue among nearby human inhabitants.

Control

Products containing carbaryl (Sevin®) can be used to protect ornamental plants, shade trees and those fruit and nut trees listed on the container label. Applications made just prior to egg laying should provide about 5 to 8 days protection. Subsequent treatments may be necessary where heavy infestations of cicadas are present throughout the area.

Small trees and shrubs may be protected by covering them with open-weave cloth or netting. The cloth should be put in place as cicadas appear and remain until egg-laying has ceased 5 to 8 weeks later.

Insecticide label clearances are subject to change and changes may have occurred since this publication was printed. The pesticide USER is always responsible for the effects of pesticides on his own plants or household goods as well as problems caused by drift from his property to other properties or plants. *Always read and follow carefully the instructions on the container label.*

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